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FM AMEMBASSY CHISINAU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7472  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS CHISINAU 001266

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UMB, DRL/AE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PBTS](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [MD](#)

SUBJECT: TRANSNISTRIAN PARLIAMENT PASSES BILL TO FACILITATE  
DIPLOMATIC TRAVEL

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please Protect Accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Transnistrian Supreme Soviet passed a bill on December 19, 2008, providing for a simplified travel regime for foreign diplomats. According to the new law, diplomats accredited in Chisinau would be able to travel to Transnistria without prior notification or coordination with Tiraspol authorities. It is likely that Smirnov will veto the bill, in which case the "Supreme Soviet" should have enough votes to override the veto. Even if the law passes, it remains to be seen whether or not the Transnistria border authorities will respect their own entity's legal system.  
End Summary.

Free Movement to and Within Transnistria in Future  
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¶2. (SBU) On December 19, 2008 the Transnistrian Supreme Soviet passed in its second and final reading a bill establishing a new travel regime for individuals with diplomatic and consular immunity. The newly adopted bill provides for free, unimpeded entry and/or transit for diplomats and their family members without prior notice for either official or personal travel. This bill also provides for free movement within Transnistria, except to areas which are considered "closed" and require special permits to be accessed. The TN "Foreign Ministry" was given the authority to deny access to diplomats who "openly called for forceful change of the constitutional order or for other extremist activity against the state".

Diplomats Are Often Turned Away Under Current Regime  
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¶3. (SBU) Currently foreign diplomats accredited in Chisinau (except for Russian and Ukrainian diplomats, and OSCE Mission staff) wishing to visit Transnistria for either business or personal purpose, have to undergo a complex process of coordinating of their trip with the Transnistrian "Foreign Ministry" or risk being turned away at the checkpoints. Either through poor coordination between various agencies in Tiraspol, or as a result of an active intention declared by hardliners, diplomats are frequently turned away at the checkpoint. Access or denial is an unpredictable affair, and each trip involves a risk of wasted time for the journey and cancelled appointments, every time travel is undertaken.

Comment:  
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¶4. (SBU) This law will still have to be promulgated by "President" Smirnov, before it would come into force. However, it is quite likely that Smirnov may impose his veto by refusing to sign this bill. When this draft bill was examined in its first reading, the Executive Branch indicated its opposition to it. The current problematic travel regime is regulated by Smirnov's decree and serves to support Transnistria's self-isolationism as favored by the hard-liners. The bill was personally introduced by Parliamentary

Speaker Shevchuk in an effort to facilitate greater contact with the outside world. However, even if the bill passes, it remains to be seen whether the "Border Guards," who are controlled by the hard-liners, will actually implement the new law.